

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

CASE NO. 2:24-cr-00016-LK

Plaintiff,

ORDER CONTINUING TRIAL

V.

JOSE MANUEL FRIAS LOPEZ et al.,

Defendants.

This matter comes before the Court on the Government and Defendant Diego Armando Garcia Cardenas' Stipulated Motion to Continue Trial. Dkt. No. 97. Both parties move to continue the trial in this case from July 7, 2025 to March 23, 2026, and to continue the pretrial motions deadline to January 12, 2026. *Id.* at 1; Dkt. No. 83. Mr. Garcia Cardenas has waived his speedy trial rights through April 6, 2026. Dkt. No. 98 at 1.

On May 15, 2024, a federal grand jury indicted Mr. Garcia Cardenas and numerous co-defendants on multiple counts associated with the alleged supply and distribution of cocaine. Dkt. No. 23 at 1–7. The indictment specifically charged Mr. Garcia Cardenas with one count of Conspiracy to Import Cocaine, one count of Distribution of Cocaine for Purpose of Importation,

1 and one count of Attempted Importation of Cocaine. *Id.*; *see also* 21 U.S.C. §§ 812, 952, 959(a),
2 960(a)(1), (3), 960(b)(1)(B), 960(b)(2)(B), 963; 18 U.S.C. § 2. Mr. Garcia Cardenas was arrested
3 in Colombia on these charges on June 6, 2024, and was detained in Colombia pending his
4 extradition to the United States. Dkt. No. 97 at 3. On January 27, 2025, the Department of Foreign
5 Affairs for the Republic of Colombia provided notice to the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia
6 that the extradition of Mr. Garcia Cardenas had been granted by the Colombian government. *Id.*
7 Mr. Cardenas Garcia's extradition to the United States was completed on May 1, 2025, when
8 agents of the United States "first brought" Cardenas Garcia to the Western District of Washington
9 via charter flight from Colombia. *Id.* (citing 18 U.S.C. § 3238). On May 2, 2025, Mr. Garcia
10 Cardenas made his initial appearance in this District, was arraigned on the charges contained in
11 the Superseding Indictment, and entered pleas of not guilty. *Id.* at 3–4; *see also* Dkt. No. 83. On
12 May 6, 2025, Mr. Garcia Cardenas appeared before the Honorable S. Kate Vaughan, United States
13 Magistrate Judge for the Western District of Washington, for a detention hearing. Dkt. No. 88.
14 Following argument from both parties, the Court ordered that Mr. Garcia Cardenas be detained
15 pending trial. *Id.*; Dkt. No. 89.

16 Of the ten total defendants in this matter, only two—Mr. Garcia Cardenas and his
17 codefendant Jose Luis Villafane Osorio—have made appearances. Dkt. Nos. 50, 83. On May 16,
18 2025, Mr. Villafane Osorio pleaded guilty to Counts 1 and 4 of the Superseding Indictment. Dkt.
19 Nos. 93, 95. Mr. Villafane Osorio is pending sentencing before the Court on August 13, 2025. Dkt.
20 No. 95. Of the remaining eight defendants, six remain in Colombia pending extradition and two
21 remain at large outside of the United States. Dkt. No. 97 at 4.

22 As this case has been pending before the Court since July 2024 (when codefendant
23 Villafane Osorio made his first appearance), there are several batches of discovery that are ready
24 for production to Mr. Garcia Cardenas. *Id.* These productions consist of more than 15,000 pages

1 of discovery and include hundreds of DEA reports, wiretap pleadings relating to three rounds of
2 wiretaps, wire intercept sessions (audio, text messages and MMS/internet data), search warrant
3 materials, undercover audio and video recordings, and audio, video, and photos related to
4 enforcement actions conducted from 2020 through June 2024. *Id.*

5 In addition to these materials relating to the United States' investigation, in January 2025,
6 the United States received results from a mutual legal assistance request for materials relating to
7 the investigation conducted by Colombia National Police ("CNP") personnel in Colombia. *Id.*
8 These materials include records of intercepted wire communications conducted pursuant to
9 Colombian law, CNP reports (all of which are in the Spanish language), and audio and video
10 recordings of controlled buys conducted in Colombia in May, August, and November 2023. *Id.* at
11 4–5. The materials are voluminous, and the Government is in the process of preparing them for
12 production to defense counsel. *Id.* at 5. In addition, the Government will be submitting another
13 mutual legal assistance request for evidence from Colombia, and once that evidence is produced,
14 "the defense will need additional time to review and analyze the evidence prior to the filing of
15 pretrial motions and preparing for trial." *Id.* at 6.

16 "Based upon the respective schedules of counsel for Mr. Garcia Cardenas and the
17 Government, as well as the volume of discovery in this case" and the pretrial work required of
18 defense counsel as described above, "the parties agree[] that March 23, 2026, is the earliest date
19 this case could realistically be ready for trial[.]" *Id.* at 5.

20 Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), the Court finds that the ends of justice served by
21 granting a continuance outweigh the best interest of the public and Mr. Garcia Cardenas in any
22 speedier trial. Specifically, the Court finds that failure to grant the requested continuance would
23 likely result in a miscarriage of justice by denying counsel for Mr. Garcia Cardenas the reasonable
24 time necessary for effective preparation for trial, taking into account the exercise of due diligence

1 and the complexity of the case, including the number of defendants and the nature of the
2 prosecution. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(B)(i)–(ii). The Court finds that the additional time
3 requested is a reasonable period of delay and will be necessary to provide Mr. Garcia Cardenas
4 reasonable time to accomplish the above tasks. The Court further finds that the failure to grant a
5 continuance of the trial date and pretrial motions deadline would deny defense counsel the
6 reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into account the exercise of due
7 diligence, withing the meaning of 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(B)(iv).

8 For these reasons, the Court GRANTS the Government and Mr. Garcia Cardenas'
9 stipulated motion, Dkt. No. 97, and ORDERS that the trial date for Mr. Garcia Cardenas shall be
10 continued from July 7, 2025 to March 23, 2026, and that the pretrial motions deadline shall be
11 continued to January 12, 2026. It is further ORDERED that, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A)
12 and (B), the period of delay from the date of this Order to the new trial date is EXCLUDED when
13 computing the time within which Mr. Garcia Cardenas' trial must commence under the Speedy
14 Trial Act.

15 Dated this 28th day of May, 2025.

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17 Lauren King
18 United States District Judge
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